

IN THE CLAIMS:

The claims are revised, as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A microprocessor system for executing instructions described in a
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program, said system comprising:

a main processor for executing by ~~means of~~ hardware ~~those~~ instructions which belong to a first instruction set and for executing by ~~means of~~ software ~~those~~ instructions which belong to a second instruction set, said main processor including an interrupt request reception circuit; and

a co-processor operative under the control of said main processor for autonomously fetching an instruction belonging to said second instruction set to execute same by ~~means of~~ its hardware.

said co-processor including an interrupt request generation circuit, said interrupt request generation circuit being connected to said interrupt request reception circuit by at least one signal line and allowing an interrupt vector address to be identified in said main processor.

2. (Original claim) A microprocessor system according to claim 1, wherein said co-processor detects an encounter with a specific one of the instructions belonging to said second instruction set which said co-processor cannot process by itself and issues a notification of said encounter to said main processor to thereby request the main processor to execute said specific instruction.

3. (Currently amended) A microprocessor system according to claim 2, wherein said co-

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processor detects an encounter with a specific one of the instructions belonging to said second instruction set for which data ~~present~~ presently under the control of said main processor needs to be handled to thereby determine that said co-processor has encountered a specific instruction which cannot be processed by itself.

4. (Currently amended) A microprocessor system according to claim 2, wherein said co-processor issues said notification by ~~means of~~ dedicated interrupt vectors assigned in advance, respectively, to a predetermined number of ~~ones~~ of the instructions belonging to said second instruction set which have a higher frequency of execution than the other instructions.

5. (Currently amended) A microprocessor system according to claim 4, wherein ~~each at least one of~~ said dedicated interrupt vectors is assigned to a plurality of instructions belonging to said second instruction set.

6. (Currently amended) A microprocessor system according to claim 4, wherein priorities are set to a plurality of ~~ones~~ of said dedicated interrupt vectors.

7. (Original claim) A microprocessor system according to claim 6, wherein a single instruction is assigned to a given one of said dedicated interrupt vectors to which a higher priority is set, while a plurality of instructions are assigned to a given one of said dedicated interrupt vectors to which a lower priority is set.

8. (Currently amended) A microprocessor system according to claim 1, wherein said co-

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processor further comprising comprises:

a stack memory for holding data generated in the course of execution of an instruction which belongs to said second instruction set;

a stack pointer for holding an address of the most recent data in said stack memory; and

a hardware resource for carrying out a process for updating said stack pointer among processes which take place in the course of execution of said specific instruction.

9. (Currently amended) A microprocessor system according to claim 2, wherein said co-processor further comprising comprises:

a program counter for holding an address of an instruction which is currently processed and belongs to said second instruction set; and

a hardware resource for carrying out a process for updating said program counter among processes which take place in the course of execution of said specific instruction.

10. (Currently amended) A microprocessor system according to claim 2, wherein said co-processor further comprises:

a status register for holding information indicative of a need of said notification, and wherein said main processor periodically accesses said status register to recognize, from a content of said status register, that said co-processor has encountered said specific instruction to thereby execute said specific instruction.

11. (Currently amended) A microprocessor system according to claim 4, wherein said

interrupt request reception circuit in said main processor further comprises an interrupt request reception circuit for encoding ~~encodes~~ said dedicated interrupt vectors sent from said co-processor to specify an interrupt handler which corresponds to said specific instruction to be processed.

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12. (Original claim) A microprocessor system according to claim 2, wherein said co-processor further comprises an instruction queue for holding a fetched instruction which belongs to said second instruction set and wherein said main processor refers to said instruction queue of said co-processor to specify an interrupt handler which corresponds to said specific instruction to be executed.

13. (Currently amended) A microprocessor system according to claim 1, wherein said co-processor ~~has~~ includes a stack architecture.

14. (Currently amended) A microprocessor system according to claim 13, further comprising:
a stack memory provided outside said co-processor,
wherein said co-processor further comprises:
a stack-top register for holding a predetermined number of top data of stack data.

15. (Currently amended) A microprocessor system according to claim 14, wherein said co-processor further comprises:
a cache memory provided between said stack memory and said stack-top register for caching a part of data held in said stack memory.

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16. (Original claim) A microprocessor system according to claim 14, wherein said co-processor detects a predetermined instruction for which stack data needs to be manipulated over said stack-top register and said stack memory, whereupon said co-processor moves contents of said stack-top register to said stack memory and thereafter requests said main processor to execute said predetermined instruction, said main processor referring to contents of said stack memory, to which said contents of said stack-top register have been moved, to thereby execute said predetermined instruction.
 17. (Currently amended) A microprocessor system according to claim 1, further comprising:
a plurality of co-processors in correspondence with a plurality of processes described in a program.
 18. (Currently amended) A microprocessor system according to claim 1, further comprising:
a program memory in which instructions belonging to said second instruction set are contained, wherein said co-processor further comprises:
a program counter for holding an address of an instruction that is currently processed and belongs to said second instruction set;
an instruction queue for holding instructions which belong to said second instruction set; and
an instruction fetch circuit for fetching an instruction belonging to said second instruction set from said program memory using a value contained in said program counter as its address and for setting the fetched instruction to said instruction queue.

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19. (New) A method of processing computer programs, said method comprising:

using a main processor for executing hardware instructions which belong to a first instruction set and for executing software instructions which belong to a second instruction set;

using a co-processor, operative under the control of said main processor, for autonomously fetching instructions belonging to said second instruction set to execute the fetched instructions by its hardware, wherein said co-processor is unable to execute at least one instruction in said second instruction set; and

generating an interrupt request from said co-processor to said main processor when said co-processor detects encountering one of the instructions belonging to said second instruction set which said co-processor cannot process by itself, thereby requesting that said main processor execute said instruction,

wherein said interrupt request comprises a signal on at least one signal line between said main processor and said co-processor.

20. (New) The method of claim 19, further comprising:

converting said encoded signal into an interrupt handler address in said main processor.

21. (New) The method of claim 19, wherein said at least one signal line comprises a plurality of signal lines.

22. (New) A microprocessor system, comprising:

a main processor including an interrupt request reception circuit;

a co-processor operative under the control of said main processor for autonomously fetching and executing an instruction, said co-processor including an interrupt request

generation circuit; and

at least one signal line interconnecting said interrupt request generation circuit and said interrupt request reception circuit.

23. (New) The microprocessor system of claim 22, wherein said at least one signal line comprises a plurality of signal lines.